

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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October 31, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Yokomizo', written over the 'TO:' line.

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: CalWORKs HOMELESS SERVICES

This is a follow-up to our May 26, 2005 memo to your Board, entitled "Skid Row Outreach Strategies," in which we reported on our Skid Row outreach strategies implemented to identify and address the immediate needs of homeless families in Skid Row, as well as on the range of other CalWORKs homeless services that we had implemented earlier this year.

Last fiscal year, DPSS helped more than 5,000 CalWORKs families avoid homelessness by providing approximately \$3.5 million in moving assistance and emergency assistance to prevent eviction. In addition, from January through June of this year, we helped over 6,000 CalWORKs families secure temporary shelter with expenditures of nearly \$3 million on emergency shelter and temporary homeless assistance.

This memo informs your Board of our plans regarding the continuation of our CalWORKs homeless services in light of receiving our Fiscal Year (FY) 2005/06 CalWORKs Single Allocation from the State. As described in detail below and in the attachment to this memo, we plan to sustain all CalWORKs homeless services funded with the Single Allocation through this fiscal year, but need to curtail two services funded with Performance Incentives – Net County Cost (PI-NCC) because of the limited amount of available PI-NCC.

HELPING FAMILIES AVOID HOMELESSNESS

Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE)

Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE) helps families who are at risk of losing their housing due to non-payment of rent caused by a financial hardship (not for any other lease/contract violation). EAPE provides funds to pay rent and/or utilities for up to two months in arrears to assist the family with maintaining permanent housing. A total of 3,232 families were served during FY 2004/05, with \$2,055,894 in payments issued.

It is our intent to continue this program through June 2006. There are adequate Single Allocation funds available to continue this program for our Welfare-to-Work (WtW) participants; however, more PI-NCC funding will be needed to fund this program to the end of FY 2005/06 for CalWORKs families who are not part of our WtW program, such as families with no aided adult and families where the adult is exempt from WtW participation. We will be coming to your Board in November to request this funding.

Moving Assistance

This program helps families who are experiencing a financial hardship, or who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (already received an eviction notice or 3-day notice to pay or quit). Moving Assistance (MA) provides funds for last month's rent, security deposits, utility turn-on fees, and moving expenses (i.e., truck rental). The MA program also provides up to \$405 for a stove and/or refrigerator. A family may receive up to \$2,000. A total of 1,920 families were served during FY 2004/05, with \$1,427,884 in payments issued.

It is our intent to continue this program through June 2006. There are adequate Single Allocation funds available to continue this program for our WtW participants; however, more PI-NCC funding will be needed to fund this to the end of FY 2005/06 for non-WtW CalWORKs families. We will be coming to your Board in November to request this funding.

EMERGENCY HOUSING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

Temporary Homeless Assistance Program (THAP)+14

The CalWORKs State Temporary Homeless program allows a family who is apparently eligible to CalWORKs to receive up to 16 consecutive days of temporary shelter from a commercial establishment (e.g., hotel or motel) while they look for permanent housing. A family may receive \$40 per night and up to \$80, depending on family size, in increments not to exceed seven days. This program is directly funded by the State and is limited to once in a lifetime.

Through our County program, DPSS supplements the State's Temporary Homeless Assistance program, providing an additional 14 days of temporary shelter payments. This allows families two additional weeks to stay in hotels/motels while they continue to search for permanent housing. From implementation on January 18, 2005 through June 2005, a total of 5,296 families have been served, with \$1,862,444 in payments issued.

We will continue this program with Single Allocation funds for our CalWORKs WtW population; however, due to scarce PI-NCC funds, we will stop this program for our non-WtW population effective November 15, 2005.

Emergency Shelter Services

Effective January 11, 2005, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) began providing emergency housing and services for CalWORKs WtW homeless families. Funding for this program was extended by your Board through December 2005. From implementation in January 2005 through August 2005, a total of 944 families were served, with \$971,376 in payments issued.

Since sufficient Single Allocation funding is available to continue this program through the end of FY 2005-06, we plan to return to your Board in November to request authority to extend our contract with LAHSA for these services for the remainder of FY 2005/06.

CalWORKs Homeless Families Project

This project helps CalWORKs WtW homeless families secure emergency and permanent housing through intensive services from Department of Mental Health (DMH), DPSS, and LAHSA. In December 2004, your Board authorized expanding this project from the two pilot CalWORKs districts to six CalWORKs districts spread throughout the County. The team offers assistance with applying for public benefits, emergency housing, finding permanent housing, crisis intervention, and employment/supportive services. From December 2000 - August 2005, 375 families (816 children) have been served under this project, with \$744,662 in expenditures.

The project was funded through September 2005, with continued funding dependent on our FY 2005/06 Single Allocation. We will be able to continue this project through June 2006 based on our Single Allocation funding.

Skid Row Family Outreach Team (SROT)

In February 2005, we implemented the SROT project to identify homeless families on Skid Row and connect them with available benefits and services. The team has been comprised of staff from LAHSA, DMH, and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). A DPSS Homeless Case Manager was added to the team on October 20, 2005. As of October 14, 2005, 462 families had been served by SROT. Current funding for the SROT is \$120,000 per year.

Since sufficient Single Allocation funding is available to continue this team through the end of FY 2005-06, we plan to return to your Board in November to request authority to extend our contract with LAHSA for these services for the remainder of FY 2005/06.

PERMANENT HOUSING FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

Through the State Permanent Homeless Assistance program, we can provide funds to homeless CalWORKs families to move into permanent housing. The family's share of the rent cannot exceed 80% of the monthly CalWORKs grant for the family size. The family may receive payments for move-in costs, such as: last month's rent, key deposits, cleaning fees, etc. However, the payment cannot exceed two times the total rent (rent before subsidies).

This is a once-in-a-lifetime payment, unless the family qualifies for an exception, such as domestic violence, former residence becomes uninhabitable, or a medically-verified physical or mental illness, excluding drug addiction or psychological stress. Additional funds can be issued for utility deposits as needed. This program is directly funded by the State.

In addition to the State program, we provide funds for permanent housing through the County's Moving Assistance program (described above) and the Rental Subsidy Assistance program.

Rental Subsidy Assistance

Effective January 18, 2005, DPSS implemented the Rental Subsidy Assistance program. Under this program, families receiving Permanent Homeless Assistance or Moving Assistance can qualify for a monthly rental subsidy of up to \$250 per family (based on family size) for up to four consecutive months. From implementation on January 18, 2005 through June 2005, 337 families have accessed the program, with \$64,371 in payments issued.

We will continue this program with Single Allocation funds for our WtW CalWORKs population; however, due to scarce PI-NCC funds, we will stop offering this program to additional non-WtW participants effective November 15, 2005.

CASE MANAGEMENT/BENEFIT ACCESS SERVICES

Homeless Case Management

In July 2005, we expanded our Homeless Case Management pilot to all district offices. All CalWORKs homeless families will have a case manager to facilitate access to services, initiate referrals, and move the family into permanent housing. The services include crisis intervention, short-term stabilization, needs assessment, employment services, and an individualized housing plan. This program is funded through Single Allocation.

Homeless Families Benefits Access Team

From mid-January 2005 through the end of June 2005, eligibility staff was outstationed at the Weingart Access Center to facilitate access to benefits and services for homeless families, including families referred by SROT. This project was called the Homeless Families Benefits Access Team. Due to the low volume of applicants, in July 2005, this outstationed eligibility staff returned to the Metro Family District office but remained "on-call" to return to Skid Row if needed.

Effective October 20, 2005, eligibility staff is again outstationed on Skid Row (at the Midnight Mission and the Weingart Access Center) and will be visiting each shelter and mission on Skid Row each business day to provide information and take applications from families.

Also, by November 2005, DPSS will establish on-call eligibility staff in each CalWORKs district office to facilitate access to benefits and services for homeless families. Since existing staff will be designated for this on-call function, there is no direct additional cost associated with this approach.

Screening for Endangered/At-Risk Children

DPSS and DCFS collaboratively developed a screening tool to identify endangered or at-risk homeless children needing DCFS services. This tool was piloted in the Skid Row area for five (5) months. Due to the low number of children identified during the pilot, we are changing our strategy and currently meeting with DCFS to develop procedures on how to identify and report child abuse and neglect in homeless cases.

Also, the plan is to have DCFS provide training for both DPSS and DCFS staff on their role, their service and interface, and how to identify signs of child abuse or neglect, including when the family is homeless. Target date for implementation is January 2006.

Housing Counseling/Relocation Specialists

Our plan is to contract for relocation services to assist homeless families in locating permanent, affordable housing. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be conducted to contract for these services. Implementation is targeted for July 2006. This staff will coordinate with our Homeless Case Managers, and will have primary responsibility for identifying appropriate neighborhoods and affordable housing for families, overcoming barriers to obtaining housing (e.g., poor credit and evictions), negotiating with landlords, and maintaining a database of available housing.

ADDITIONAL PI-NCC FUNDING FOR MA AND EAPE

In May 2005, your Board approved that any PI-NCC funds not utilized by June 30, 2006 were to be allocated in FY 2006/07 to sustain CalWORKs homeless prevention services to the extent those services cannot be funded through the CalWORKs Single Allocation. We have identified approximately \$1.9 million in PI-NCC funds that were allocated for the Transitional Subsidized Employment Program which will remain unspent this FY as this program can be funded through available Single Allocation funds. In order to continue funding the MA and EAPE programs through June 2006, we will be asking your Board in November to allow this \$1.9 million PI-NCC to be utilized this FY to sustain the MA and EAPE programs for non-WtW CalWORKs families.

A summary of the homeless services available to CalWORKs families is shown on the attachment.

BY:mr

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Public Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Director, Mental Health
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

CalWORKs HOMELESS SERVICES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUMMARY CHART

Helping Families Avoid Homelessness	Emergency Housing for Homeless Families	Permanent Housing for Homeless Families
Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction	Temporary Homeless Assistance	Permanent Homeless Assistance
Moving Assistance	Temporary Homeless Assistance +14*	Rental Subsidy Assistance*
	Emergency Shelter Services**	Moving Assistance
	CalWORKs Homeless Families Project**	Housing Counselors/Relocation Specialists
	Skid Row Family Outreach Team (SROT)	
Case Management/Benefit Access Services		
Homeless Case Management (HCM)		
Homeless Families Benefits Access Team		
Screening for Endangered/At-Risk Children		

*To be limited to WtW participants as of 11/15/05

**Limited to WtW participants

CONTINUATION OF CalWORKs HOMELESS SERVICES BASED ON STATE, CalWORKs SINGLE ALLOCATION AND PI-NCC FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005/06

CalWORKs Homeless Services	Availability of Single Allocation Funding	Availability of PI-NCC Funding
Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE)	All Year	All Year*
Moving Assistance	All Year	All Year*
Temporary Homeless Assistance	State Program	
Temporary Homeless Assistance Program (THAP)+14	All Year	Terminated 11/15/05
Emergency Shelter Services	All Year*	None
CalWORKs Homeless Families Project	All Year	None
Skid Row Family Outreach Team (SROT)	All Year*	Not Applicable
Permanent Homeless Assistance	State Program	
Rental Subsidy Assistance	All Year	Terminated 11/15/05
Housing Counselors/Relocation Specialists	All Year	Not Applicable
Homeless Case Management	All Year	Not Applicable
Homeless Families Benefits Access Team	No Cost	No Cost
Screening for Endangered/At-Risk Children	No Cost	No Cost

Note: None - This service is only available to CalWORKs WtW families.

Not Applicable – Single Allocation funds are used to provide this service to WtW and non-WtW CalWORKs Families.

*Contingent on Board approval of funding